

## **Section IV**

### **Economic Services Section Monitoring Plan**

#### **PURPOSE**

The Economic Services Section is responsible for the Food Stamp Program, Refugee Assistance Programs, and the Low Income Energy Assistance (LIEAP) and Crisis Intervention (CIP) Program components of the Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Block Grant. Each federally-funded program has different compliance requirements for program and fiscal accountability.

#### **OVERVIEW**

The Section has two (2) full-time Program Compliance Representative positions responsible for accomplishing monitoring for the Section. They complete the Management Evaluation reviews for the Food Stamp program, monitor Food Stamp Nutrition Education projects, and monitoring of both LIEAP and CIP.

In addition, Refugee Consultant for Program Benefits conducts monitoring for Refugee Cash Assistance.

#### **Food Stamp Program Management Evaluation Reviews**

The United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (USDA-FNS) requires a county level review of the management of the Food Stamp Program on a prescribed schedule. Areas covered by the review include timeliness of application and review processing, program access, customer service, compliance with civil rights laws, including Americans with Disabilities (ADA), employment and training activities, claims, payment accuracy, and Nutrition Education programs.

#### **Risk Assessment**

Reviews are scheduled according to the size of the Food Stamp caseload in the county, with the largest (caseload in excess of 15,000) being reviewed every year, the next largest every two years (caseload from 2,000 to 14,999) and the small counties every three years (caseload below 2,000). The review period runs from October through September each year. In FFY 06, reviews will be conducted in forty six (46) counties using the following plan:

**NORTH CAROLINA ME REVIEWS DUE**  
**FFY 2006**

Tentative Schedule

COUNTY	REVIEW MONTH	COUNTY	REVIEW MONTH
Alexander	11/05	Lee	12/05
Beaufort	5/06	Lincoln	12/05
Brunswick	3/06	Macon	11/05
Burke	10/05	Madison	10/05
Cabarrus	1/06	Mecklenburg	5/06
Caldwell	10/05	Montgomery	1/06
Catawba	11/05	Orange	2/06
Columbus	4/06	Richmond	11/05
Cumberland	1/06	Robeson	3/06
Duplin	2/06	Rockingham	3/06
Durham	1/06	Rutherford	10/05
Forsyth	1/06	Sampson	2/06
Franklin	3/06	Stanly	11/05
Gaston	12/05	Surry	5/06
Granville	10/05	Transylvania	12/05
Guilford	2/06	Union	10/05
Haywood	10/05	Wake	5/06
Henderson	4/06	Wilkes	4/06
Iredell	4/06	Yadkin	1/06
Johnston	12/05		

**Instructions for Conducting the Review**

In preparation for the review, the Automation/Performance Reporting Section selects a random sample of cases for the monitor to review on-site during the review. Samples are pulled according to a logarithm accepted as standard practice for such activities. Samples are pulled for cases transferred to Transitional Food Stamps, and a separate sample of approved and denied cases containing a representation of the racial/ethnic profile of the Food Stamp caseload in the county for civil rights and application processing compliance. Case sample sizes are:

Small counties (fewer than 2,000 cases): 5 Transitional FS Cases

10 Civil rights and application processing reviews

5 Intentional Program Violation claims cases or a combination  
if there are fewer than 5 IPV's in the sample period, review all

Medium and Large counties: 10 Transitional FS Cases

20 Civil rights and application processing reviews

5 Intentional Program Violation claims cases or a combination

If there are fewer than 5 IPV's for the sample period, review all

Part of the ME review process requires interviews with the Director of the Department of Social Services (or his/her designee), the Food Stamp supervisor, a caseworker, the Program Integrity worker, a client, and a community representative who is knowledgeable of any problems that may exist

regarding civil rights and program access. All work papers and a copy of each summary is maintained on the 10<sup>th</sup> Floor in the Albemarle Building.

The Food Stamp Program also funds Nutrition Education projects through contracts with the providers. Approved projects operate in one or more counties to provide nutrition education to the Food Stamp eligible population regarding healthy eating and activities to extend and prolong health and life. The monitor conducts a programmatic and fiscal review of activities both at the site and at University offices for those projects directed through the Cooperative Extension Service. Completed review documents are maintained on 10<sup>th</sup> floor in the Albemarle Building.

Attached are copies of the ME Review Guide as approved by USDA-FNS (summary plus 3 case review sheets), the Nutrition Education Monitoring Guide, and the Employment and Training Monitoring Guide (2 review sheets plus summary template).

### Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

#### Purpose of Review

The purpose of the review is to promote uniform application of Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program Block Grant funds for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) by all county departments, identify weaknesses which would affect the quality of services to recipients, and provide technical assistance to improve the efficiency and effectiveness in administering a quality program.

#### Risk Assessment

All DSS agencies are assessed on the ability to comply with program rules and regulations that govern the LIEAP Program. Monitoring in the LIEAP programs consists of two different processes: All counties complete a self-monitoring instrument for LIEAP. The completed documents are reviewed by the Food Assistance and Energy Programs Representatives for completeness and areas of deficiencies. The Program Compliance Reviewers also review 20 counties annually for LIEAP using the self-monitoring guide and conducting a case review of a random selection of approved and denied cases to assess accuracy and adherence to written policy and procedures. Payments are subject to the county single audit as well. Reviews scheduled for SFY 05-06 are:

Select every 5 <sup>th</sup> county starting with 01	
Johnston	Alamance
Macon	Avery
Mitchell	Buncombe
Northampton	Carteret
Pender	Chowan
Randolph	Cumberland
Rutherford	Duplin
Surry	Gaston
Vance	Guilford
Wayne	Hertford

## Instructions for Conducting the Review

County self-monitoring is the initial step in monitoring. When the county completes the LIEAP Review Guide, it is submitted to their Food Assistance and Energy Programs Representative. The Food Assistance and Energy Programs Representative examines the documents to ensure that they are completed correctly and take note of any deficiencies identified. If additional information is needed or corrective action is required because of findings in the self-assessment, the Food Assistance and Energy Programs Representative works with the county to develop the plan and follow-up on the corrective action required. The Food Assistance and Energy Programs Representative monitor program improvement for any county under corrective action to ensure the deficiency is corrected. After the Food Assistance and Energy Programs Representative reviews the documents, they are routed to the Economic Services Section.

Attached are the LIEAP Program monitoring guide and case review sheet used by Program Compliance Representatives to conduct and report case reviews. All work papers for these reviews are maintained on 10<sup>th</sup> floor in the Albemarle Building.

## Crisis Intervention Program

### Purpose of Review

The purpose of the review is to promote uniform application of Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program Block Grant funds for the Crisis Intervention Program (CI) by all county departments, identify weaknesses which would affect the quality of services to recipients, and provide technical assistance to improve the efficiency and effectiveness in administering a quality program.

### Risk Assessment

All DSS agencies are assessed on the ability to comply with program rules and regulations that govern the CIP Program. Monitoring in the CIP program. The Program Compliance Reviewers review 40 counties annually for LIEAP by conducting a case review of a random selection of approved and denied cases to assess accuracy and adherence to written policy and procedures. CIP automated system reports are also reviewed for potential duplicates and adherence to application processing timeframes. Payments are subject to the county single audit as well. Reviews planned in SFY 06 are:

<b>Select every 5<sup>th</sup> county starting with 04</b>	
<b>County Name</b>	<b>County Name</b>
Alexander	Anson
Beaufort	Bladen
Burke	Caldwell
Caswell	Chatham
Clay	Columbus
Currituck	Davidson
Durham	Forsyth
Gates	Granville
Halifax	Haywood

Hoke	Iredell
Jones	Lenoir
Madison	McDowell
Montgomery	Moore
Onslow	Pamlico
Perquimans	Pitt
Richmond	Rockingham
Sampson	Stanly
Swain	Tyrrell
Wake	Washington
Wilkes	Yadkin

### Instructions for Conducting the Review

Reviewers evaluate periodic Applications Keyed Listing Reports for trends in overdue pending cases. Five cases are selected from the Applications Keyed Listing sample of denied cases. Ten approved cases are selected the Applications Keyed Listing. The Adjustment Report is also reviewed to determine if adjustment reasons are documented clearly. The DSS CIP Cases with Matching Address Report is used to evaluate up to 8 cases on the report (some have fewer than 8 entries on them) and review all the cases in the system for each. Contact the county contact person for CIP to review the findings, clarify or resolve any outstanding or unclear issues, and advise of any corrective action needed prior to publication of the summary and letter.

Attached is the CIP Program monitoring guide used by Program Compliance Representatives to conduct and report case reviews. All work papers for these reviews are maintained on 10<sup>th</sup> floor in the Albemarle Building.

### Refugee Cash Assistance Program

#### Purpose of the Review

The purpose of the RCA review is to ensure that all county departments of social services are applying Refugee Cash Assistance policy correctly in compliance with federal ORR regulations, state policies including the NC State Refugee Plan and the Division of Social Services RCA policy manual. Any weaknesses/errors identified via the monitoring will be addressed by the local DSS via a corrective action plan. The State Refugee Office staff will provide technical assistance as needed to improve compliance with applicable regulations and ensure satisfactory service to the refugee customer.

#### Risk Assessment

Four counties (Buncombe, Guilford, Mecklenburg, and Wake) provide the majority of refugee cash assistance to eligible individuals. Monitoring is conducted for these four counties annually and monitoring for the remaining small counties is completed upon identification of applicable program activity. A sample of the active cases from each of the four primary counties in which refugee cash assistance is authorized will be selected for review from the three previous months prior to the month in which the monitoring occurs. The monitoring sample depends on the size of the county's previous performance, and other factors identified by the Refugee Program staff. In no instance, will the sample

size from these four counties be less than 15 per year, unless the total number of eligible individuals falls under that number. For some counties, the refugee cash assistance caseload is very small. In situations where counties have less than 20 eligible individuals for the year, the Refugee Program staff will randomly select a “small county” sample. The sample will be 1-5 cases from the pool of small counties with approved Refugee Cash Assistance cases in the current state fiscal year. The current list of counties for review are:

Alexander	Forsyth	Orange	Union
Buncombe (on site)	Gaston	Randolph	Wake
Burke	Guilford (on site)	Richmond	Wayne
Catawba	Iredell	Rowan	Craven
Durham	Mecklenburg	Stanly	

(Unless noted, monitoring is being completed via desk review)

### Instructions for Conducting the Review

Cash assistance cases will be selected for review from the monthly Refugee Cases and Recipients by Program report prepared by the Performance Reporting Section. Refugee Program staff will monitor the refugee cash assistance cases in one of three ways. The first method will involve staff in county departments of social services. The Refugee Consultant for Program Benefits will randomly select the cases to be reviewed and the month/s for which eligibility is to be reviewed in February each year based on the universe of cases active between July 1 and December 31 of the immediately preceding calendar year. Fifteen cases are reviewed for each county selected unless there are fewer than 15 and all cases are then reviewed.

1. Upon notifying the county of the selected cases, a county department of social services supervisor or lead worker will complete the monitoring tool for each case and photocopy appropriate documentation to support the findings, i.e., alien status documents, EIS screen prints, wage verification, etc.
2. Upon completion of the review documents, the county department of social services will send each completed form with appropriate supporting documentation to the State Refugee Office.
3. The Refugee Consultant for Program Benefits will analyze the monitoring results and a compliance letter will be prepared and mailed to the respective county department of social services.
4. If a county requires corrective action, the Refugee Consultant for Program Benefits will assist with the development of any corrective action needed and later verify that such corrective action was implemented.

The second method for monitoring will involve the Refugee Consultant for Program Benefits conducting an on-site review of approved RCA records and internal fiscal controls for this program. In this situation, the Refugee Consultant will directly monitor the case files, view verifications, and monitor fiscal controls on-site. Findings will be noted within the comment section of the monitoring tool along with the method of verification. Significant findings will be communicated both verbally at the time of review and later in writing. If a county requires corrective action, the Refugee Consultant will assist with the development of any corrective action needed and later verify that such corrective action was implemented.

The third monitoring method is for the NC State Refugee Consultant for Program Benefits to conduct a desk review of RCA cases using EIS, FSIS and other on-line information. Findings will be noted

within the comment section of the monitoring forms. Significant findings will be communicated in writing to the appropriate agency. If a county requires corrective action, the Refugee Consultant will assist the county in developing any corrective action needed and later verify that such corrective action was implemented.

All work papers, correspondence and corrective action plan documents are maintained in the Refugee Program office located on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of the Albemarle Building through the required retention period. A sample of the case review guide is attached. Section IV Attachment H